1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



837 the wives consent. This is regarded as a concern of the couples involved rather than a concern of society as a whole. One man said, 'If you want to sleep with someone's wife, you get him to sleep with yours, then neither of you goes after the other with poisoned arrows.'

[572] The word */kamheri* was used by ||Ao, one of the young hunters, to express his deep feeling of friendship for John Marshall. 'We are such friends that we are */kamheri*', he said, but, as John had no wife to exchange, this remark had its funny side which delighted the men.

No actual instance of */kamheri* came to our attention and we failed in finding out if it is now practised. One man in Gam lent his first wife to a unmarried friend, one of the gossips told us, because he was in love with his second and did not care any longer for the first, but this was a mere deviation from the rules, not an instance of */kamheri*.

We heard of several irregular sexual unions in addition to the above. Rape did not appear in stories or gossip. Fornication must be very rare because there is practically no one to fornicate with. Almost all females are married except very young girls and leathery old grandmothers. Adultery is the usual form for irregular unions
684 to take. Adultery, however, is sharply limited by several deterrents. One deterrent is
837 the incest taboo, of course, which forbids extra-marital sexual relations as rigorously as it does marriage with persons to whom the taboo is extended. The same internalized sanctions induce obedience to this rule as to the marriage regulations. The same gradation of feeling probably exists, and we expect that people comply strictly within the kindred and among close affines and are no doubt less strict with name relatives.

Ease of divorce must exert a modifying influence on adulterous unions. If a
[586] married couple really want to change mates, nothing need deter them but the general difficulty of extricating themselves from the web of responsibilities which marriage entails.

In a sense, the impossibility of maintaining secrecy exerts a control over extra-
151 marital relations. There is no privacy in a /Kung werf and the vast veld is not a cover.
● 153 The very life of these people depends on their being trained from childhood to
182 look sharply at things and to take into their attention what they see, for they must observe the most minute marks on vegetation to distinguish from the matted grasses the almost hair-thin brown vine stems that come up from the edible roots. Hunters memorize visual impressions and are able to follow the tracks of an individual animal in the midst of a large herd in a way that seems to us miraculous. It may be a week after a hunt that they return to recover an arrow that missed, miles from the werf, remembering where it lay in the vast monotonous sameness of grass and bush. They register every person's footprints in their minds, more vividly I am sure than we do faces, and read in the sand who walked where and how long ago.

185 The /Kung value control of anger, upholding self-control as an ideal, giving it
578 group and individual approval and training for it. Despite this, volatile tempers sometimes flare and burst out of all control. And always at hand are the little poisoned
[411] arrows. They are formidable weapons. There is no antidote for the poison; at least our /Kung informants said they know none and told us of tragic deaths from the poison which would have been averted had they had an antidote.

684 Adultery, so exceedingly provocative of anger and vengeance, could be very

[23 cont.]

105 and in the beyond by his traditional conceptions, and the preserva-
182 tion of this adaptation, in the spiritual as well as in the material realm, is achieved by means of a strict selection of all the cultural goods offered from the outside. This selection is consciously carried out. Put briefly: the Bushmen have hitherto refused higher
[177] economic forms not because they do not possess the ability to handle them, but because they did not want to adopt them. If the material preconditions collapse, then they adopt, step by step or all at once, totally different ways of life, as is shown by their Bantuization in Ovamboland and probably also by the formation of the Hottentot people through the adoption of livestock raising on the part of a number of Bushman tribes. Their average intelli-
[153] gence is no less than that of any other race. Every Bushman knows
[184] the entire spiritual heritage of his tribe.

Of the same Bushmen, F. Schinz (2) says:

[113] 2. F. Schinz, Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Leipzig, 1891.

181 "The Bushman is always faithful to his master and will follow him anywhere without pay; one need not worry about leaving him alone at the wagon and will rarely have to reprimand him for dishonesty. All travelers and hunters unanimously praise
[593] the great affection that exists between parents and children, which goes so far that the father or mother will sacrifice themselves in order to save their child. I was told [24] by the hunter L. that at the Okovanggo he once witnessed a scene in which a young Bushman, who was one of the members of the hunting expedition, was in danger of being trampled to death by an angry elephant that stormed toward him. At the last moment when his paralyzed companions had already given the boy up for lost, his father sprang forth and flung his throwing club at the forehead of the enormous animal. The elephant now turned against his new attacher and furiously crushed him under his feet, giving the son the opportunity to flee."

[114] My observations are fully in accord with those of Dornan (1)

[113] 1. Dornan, Pygmies and Bushmen of the Kalahari, London, 1925.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10



609 they must smoke, or when they are dying of thirst and must
648 come in to beg for water.

159 Once I talked with a young Bushman who had visited one
563 of our camps in Bechuanaland many times, who spoke Afri-
kaans, and whom I shall call Tami. I could speak a little
[191] Afrikaans, so he and I could talk together. He was in his early
thirties and had been working for some time for European
farmers. When I met him he was married, and as his wife had
[145] just had a baby, he felt that his ten-shilling-a-month wage
was inadequate and he planned to move to another part of
the country where he hoped to be paid more. As it is rather
unusual for a Bushman to uproot himself from his own coun-
try, no matter how long he has been on a farm and away from
his own people, I asked him where he had come from and
how he had learned Afrikaans.

● [153] "Oh," he said, "I learned Afrikaans in the places I have
[191] been. I have worked for white men since I was a young boy
and I have always been fast to learn their languages. In the
same way I have learned the languages of the black people."

"Where did you live before you worked for white people?" I asked.

"We lived not far from Nurigaas, at the edge of the police zone. I am a young person still, but I remember that Nurigaas was all wild then. We always lived there."

"With your parents?"

"Yes, until the police boys [1] took the old man my father."

I asked him what had happened, and he said: "We lived at the edge of the police zone, you know. We lived with
888 other Bushmen there, and my sister, she was there. My
159 mother's father was still alive then, but he was too old, he
563 couldn't even carry water, and my mother had to do every-

[1] Police boys are native policemen, usually Bantu.

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



sometimes he would abandon his gravity and laugh a high, reaching laugh that one could hear from far away, a laugh that came from his very soul, or, as Bushmen say, from his stomach. He listened diplomatically and intently whenever he was spoken to, staring at the gound, and had a habit of echoing, in a loud falsetto voice, the important phrases of every sentence he was told.

"We went to Keitsa Pan," someone might say to him.

"To Keitsa," Toma would reply.

". . . and we slept there, but the blind flies were very bad . . ."

"Oh, bad, bad . . ."

". . . but in the morning we saw two porcupines . . ."

". . . yes, porcupines . . ."

". . . and we killed them there. We made them cry . . ."

". . . made them cry . . ."

". . . made them cry."

Toma was considered to be very fortunate in his marriage. Of course it was through his wife, Tu, that he gained the leadership of the Gautscha people, his life free in the veld rather than in serfdom, and his two young sons, but besides all this his wife was beautiful, having a smooth face and great, clear eyes like a cat. Also, she was five feet tall, considered to be a very desirable height, and although no Bushman has ever been too fat, Tu was not too thin and her arms and legs were round. She had soft blue scars curving on her forehead which made her eyes seem to lift at the corners, and blue scars on her thighs that showed when she walked. Her chief virtues, in the eyes of Bushmen, were that she decorated herself with ornaments in her hair and kept her hands and face washed, thus demonstrating that she cared what she looked like, rather than letting herself go now that she was married. To show that she observed propriety, cared what

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
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had carried him there and it was there that the second group of farmers had found him, unable to escape or to resist, and they had taken him away. His wife was still waiting at Gautscha and Lazy Kwi had returned there to tell her that her husband had gone.

At the farm, though, Toma's luck had begun to turn. The farmer had gradually managed to heal his wounds with medicine and treatment, and by the start of the dry season Toma had felt quite well. One night, when the veld was quiet and dark, Toma had thanked the farmer in his heart, had gathered all the Bushmen on the farm together, and had led the people over the veld, all the way back to Nyae Nyae. It had been a long walk, a long way, but Toma had managed. Now, said Lazy Kwi, Toma's wound ached on cold days and sometimes his vision was blurry, but he was pleased with himself and pleased to be back in his own country.

Lazy Kwi was pleased with him too, and he smiled when he finished the story.

When the first light of morning came, the air was so cold that our breath made clouds. We got up, fed the fire, and cooked the remainder of last night's meat, then drove off in the jeep again, for in that early light we had seen the smoke of three veld fires on the horizon, one in the south, two in the west, perhaps kindled by Bushmen during the night, perhaps revived by the wind from old embers, and we planned to make a circle to investigate them all.

On the way we found a bee tree that had been raided for its honey and we believed that Toma had done it, although the break was old and the bees were gone away; but after looking at it a moment Lazy Kwi remembered that he had done it himself during the last rains. He remembered too that there had been very little honey and that he had got stung, and

9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
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since that was all he remembered we went on again to the source of the first of the three fires.

It was there that we found Toma. He had been there all the time, only a few miles from where we had camped, and when he heard our jeep coming he watched us over the top of a bush before showing himself to see first who we were.

We saw him when he ran toward us. He was quite far off and we saw first his dark figure detach itself from the bush and run with long, swinging strides toward our jeep. He waved his arms and we knew at once that this, at last, was Toma. Before he reached us a second figure appeared from behind another bush and ran beside him, and we knew from the disjointed stride that this second man was Gao Big Feet, Toma's brother-in-law. We turned our jeep toward them and soon we met and the two men embraced us and laughed and said that they had known we would come back someday, and then they climbed in the jeep and took us to their werf, stopping first to get their spears and quivers, which they had left in the bushes, for no Bushman, no matter how excited, ever greets people with his weapons on his back because this might be taken as a sign that he was quarrelsome, looking for a fight.

Their werf was in a tiny thicket of thorn trees at the edge of the plain, screened in front by bushes, carefully concealed, but on a rise of ground where a man standing could easily scan the surrounding plain without being seen himself. There Toma and Gao Feet could observe the movements of the antelope that crossed the plains below them, waiting patient in the dappled shade of their trees' broad leaves as lions do. The two families stood in front of their bushes to meet us and they, too, embraced us and they all climbed in the jeep to do this, then climbed out again and stood back to see how we were.